[This is a press statement that was delivered verbally outside Multnomah County Central Courthouse, and carried by several news outlets, after Benjamin Smith's plea hearing on March 8, 2023. It has been lightly edited for clarity.]

My name is Katherine Knapp, and June Knightly was my wife and partner for 22 years, nine months, and nearly seven days until she was shot to death by Benjamin Smith at Normandale Park on February 19th, 2022.

With me are some survivors of the shooting, as well as one family member. The survivors are the only people we're aware of to witness the unprovoked verbal assault that Smith unleashed before opening fire on a group of women who were there to provide traffic safety for that evening's racial justice march.

On February 20th, 2022, the Portland Police Bureau issued a press release asserting the following:

> "A preliminary investigation into the February 19, 2022 shooting near the intersection of Northeast 55th Avenue and Northeast Hassalo Street indicates this incident started with a confrontation between an armed homeowner and armed protesters."

In reality, Smith lived in an apartment building near the park, and no one in the group of women he initially approached was armed.

When Portland Police Chief Chuck Lovell spoke at a video press conference on February 22nd, 2022, the word "homeowner" had been replaced with "area resident" in reference to the Normandale shooter. However, Lovell failed to correct the original press release's most egregious claim that the incident "started with a confrontation" with "armed protesters".

The language chosen by the Portland Police Bureau and Chief Lovell had neatly set up a self-defense case for Smith. The city's official archive containing the original press release was altered to remove the word "homeowner," with no acknowledgment of its original inclusion, no explanation for its removal, and no apology for using it in the first place. However, the phrase "armed protesters" remains to this day.

The Portland Police Bureau, as well as local and national politicians and pundits, have long characterized people associated with racial justice protests as threats to the public, thereby giving potential vigilantes license to take violent action of their own accord.

I want to make this very clear - the only reason that Benjamin Smith pled guilty today is because one of the shooting victims had the presence of mind to turn on her helmet camera and document what was quickly becoming a dangerous situation. Documentary evidence of the encounter was necessary to combat the false narrative that would likely be constructed by the Portland Police Bureau if the confrontation turned violent. And that's exactly what happened.

Today, we take some satisfaction in at least knowing that Benjamin Smith finally acknowledged the truth and conceded that he is, in fact, guilty as charged on all counts.